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**COOPER VOTES TO INCREASE SURVIVOR BENEFITS FOR TROOPS KILLED IN
COMBAT**

Payment doubles to \$12,000 and now fully tax exempt

WASHINGTON, D.C.-U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper voted to increase survivor benefits to the families of troops killed in action or serving in a combat zone. The bill, which passed the House of Representatives Tuesday afternoon by a strong majority, will double the military death benefit to \$12,000 and make the full amount tax exempt.

"American soldiers are fighting and dying to preserve freedom. We owe them the peace of mind that comes from knowing their families' immediate financial needs will be taken care of, should they not make it back home," Cooper said. "Increasing survivor benefits and making them fully tax exempt is a small step but one that will provide help when the families of these brave men and women need it most."

Currently, the death benefit to military survivors killed in a combat zone is \$6,000, with half of that subject to taxes. The new \$12,000 benefit is fully tax exempt and retroactive to September 11, 2001.

The death benefit was created to assist survivors with financial needs during the period immediately following the soldier's death and before other survivor benefits become available.

Cooper is a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

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